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THE THEATRES OF WASHINGTON FROM 1835 TO 1850.

By ALOYSIUS I. MUDD.

(Read before the Society November 10, 1902.)

In my former paper* I traced the history of the Washington stage from the opening of the United States Theatre in the Blodgett Hotel in the summer of the year 1800 up to and including the closing of the American Theatre situated on Louisiana Avenue between Four-and-a-half and Sixth Streets, February 8, 1836. I also gave a brief account of the building and opening of the first National Theatre in 1835.

In the present paper I will go back some months and speak more fully of that theatre.

As stated in my former paper the newspapers in the very early days did not print notices of theatrical performances. Later, notices written by occasional correspondents appeared, and as time rolled on these notices became quite frequent. The papers, however, took unusual pains to state that they were not responsible for the sentiments contained therein. These correspondents were not at all backward in criticising both plays and players. The faults of the performers were laid bare and they were advised to learn their parts, to stick to the text, to dress correctly, etc. The attention of some of them was called to their indistinct enunciation, to their talking too loud or too low, to their mouthing, to their ranting, and to various other defects. They praised those whom they deemed worthy of

* Read before the Society January 7, 1901.

praise, and the actresses—according to these critics—were like brides, handsome and accomplished. Who ever heard of an ugly bride? If a woman is as homely as—as Meg Merriles is represented on the stage—when she becomes a bride the papers always describe her as being handsome and accomplished. So with the actresses, they were all handsome and had figures like Venus. Still later the newspapers printed notices of performances which were prepared in their own offices.

As is well known Washington was an unpaved city and the streets were badly lighted. When it rained the streets were filled with mud puddles. In fact a communication signed by a member of Congress was printed in the *National Intelligencer* in 1835 complaining that the lamps were not lighted and that people could not walk the streets at night without falling into mud holes. It was also stated that about that time it cost \$10 for a hack to take a party to and from the theatre. As a consequence of these uncomfortable conditions the performance often did not take place on nights when the weather was very inclement.

As Washington grew in size and importance the population moved westward and a movement was inaugurated to build a more modern theatre, and nearer the center of the city. This movement resulted in the organization of a stock company of prominent citizens, and plans were drawn for a new theatre to be built on the triangular park in front of the present National Theatre. August 26, 1834, proposals were invited for the erection of the structure. Later, ground was purchased about where that theatre now stands, the plans were changed, and November 26 proposals were again asked for. The building was begun early in 1835 and finished in November of that year. It was of Roman Doric, resting on a basement 13 feet 6 inches in height

with a portico 41 feet 6 inches long by 12 feet 9 inches in breadth, consisting of four brick Roman Doric columns 29 feet 6 inches in height with antæ, entablature, and balustrade. The front was 76 feet 6 inches wide, the building running back 150 feet and 50 feet in height. It was stuccoed in imitation of granite and had five large doors and a like number of windows in front.

The parquette was arranged so that the floor could be removed in order that the building might be used as an amphitheatre. The stage was 68 x 71 feet.

The dome was painted a pale cerulean blue and was divided into four allegorical designs. The first represented the Genius of the Institutions of the country, designated by Power and Wisdom repelling Tyranny and Superstition. The second represented Truth at the altar from which the Spirits of War and Peace had taken the sword and torch. The third represented the Goddess of Wisdom presenting a medallion of Washington to the Goddess of Liberty, who returned a wreath to crown her favorite son—Fame proclaiming Victory and Peace. The last represented Justice protecting and guiding the commerce and manufactures of America. All the ornaments of the interior were of a national character Sepresenting, either by allegorical design or historical illustrations, important events in the history of the country. What had in the earlier theatres been known as the pit was done away with and in its place a parquette was substituted and connected with the lower boxes. Then there was the first gallery or first tier, the second tier and the gallery. A part of this gallery was set apart for persons of color.

The theatre was leased to Messrs, Maywood, Rowbotham and Platt of the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia.

November 10, 1835, the managers offered a prize of a silver cup valued at \$50 for the best opening address not to exceed sixty lines.

Mr. H. Penrose Vass, of Baltimore, Md., was the successful competitor. The theatre was opened December 7, 1835.

The opening address was delivered by Mrs. Hughes. This was followed by the sterling and excellent comedy by Macklin, entitled "The Man of the World," in which Mr. Maywood sustained the character of *Sir Pertinax Macpsychophant*. It was a part in which Mr. Maywood had gained great credit and on that occasion his fine acting elicited much well-merited applause from a highly appreciative and intelligent audience. The performance closed with the musical farce entitled "Turn Out."

The prices of admission were: First tier of boxes and parquette \$1, second and third tiers 50 cents, gallery 25 cents.

The doors were opened at a quarter-past 6 and the performance commenced at 7 o'clock, but later the hours were changed to 5:45 and 6:30, so that the entertainments might conclude at as near ten o'clock as possible.

Miss Wheatley, a native American actress, made her first appearance, December 8, as *Mrs. Haller*, in "The Stranger." The following night Mr. James Wallack appeared as *Hamlet*. Mr. Wallack and Miss Wheatley played "The Wonder, a Woman Keeps a Secret," "Children in the Wood," "The Hunchback," "The Honeymoon," "Bertram," "The School for Scandal," and other plays. Both received high praise for the excellence of their personations.

Mr. Balls, a celebrated light comedian from the Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres, London,

played an engagement presenting "Laugh When You Can," "Three and the Deuce," "The Dramatist," "Hunter of the Alps," "Raising the Wind," "Gretna Green," "Secrets Worth Knowing," "The Weather-cock," and "School for Scandal," and sustained his high reputation as a finished performer. Saturday, December 26, Mr. Burton, the celebrated low comedian, made his first appearance before a Washington audience. The house was well filled and he met with a warm reception by a delighted audience. Mr. Rowbotham, one of the lessees, also made his first bow as an actor to his Washington patrons. During his engagement Mr. Burton appeared in "Uncle John," "The Turnpike Gate," "John Jones," "The Poor Gentleman," "The Mummy," "Second Thoughts," "Forty Winks" and "Married Life."

New Year's night, 1836, the highly celebrated comedian, John Reeve, began a short engagement during which he played "Paul Pry," "Sweethearts and Wives," "The Married Bachelor," "The Mummy" and "The Rivals." He was followed by Herr Cline, the great rope dancer. His specialties were a dance in wooden shoes, delineation of the passions, and ascension on the tight rope from the stage to the extreme height of the theatre. At this time the prices of admission were reduced to seventy-five, fifty and twenty-five cents.

"The Merchant of Venice," "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," "Rob Roy," "The Bride of Lammermoor" and other plays were performed by the regular company, Mr. Maywood sustaining the principal characters.

January 19, Mr. Abbott, a first-rate tragedian and highly popular actor on the English stage, appeared as *Hamlet*. His reading was correct, intonation fine,

and elocution well fitted to the character assumed. The part was well played throughout, and in the closet scene he electrified the audience with his heartrending bursts of pathos. He also played "The Gamester," "The Exile," "The Weathercock," "The King's Fool," "The Stranger," "Pizarro" and "The Day after the Wedding." Mrs. M. A. Duff, who as a tragedienne had no superior in this country, played a farewell engagement. For her farewell benefit she appeared as *Jane Shore*, and *Portia* in "The Merchant of Venice." Mr. Abbott was reengaged to support Mrs. Duff.

On Saturday evening, February 6, a national drama founded on facts which occurred in the State of Virginia was produced. It was called "Pocahontas; or, the First Settlers of Virginia," and was written by George Washington Parke Custis, of Arlington, Va., the adopted son of George Washington. Before the Civil War Mr. Custis' place was known as Custis' Spring, and was a noted place for holding picnics. Mr. Custis had a dancing pavilion built there and welcomed the picnic parties to his grounds.

The play was handsomely mounted, new and appropriate dresses, scenery, and properties being provided. The Commissioner of the Indian Bureau loaned a number of Indian dresses, and a Major Hook also loaned many Indian articles from his well-known collection, so as to aid the aboriginal effect. The play was well performed and the applause was general and enthusiastic. At the end of the piece the well-known and highly respected author was loudly called for and soon made his appearance. He was greatly affected by the flattering reception he met with, and stepping to the front of the stage expressed his grateful feelings to the audience.

The custom of demanding curtain speeches had grown up at that time and such speeches were made by Sheridan Knowles, Tyrone Power, Wm. E. Burton and others.

This custom has been revived at the present day, and some performers cheerfully respond to the demand. Many things that were presented in years long gone by have been revived in later years and brought out as entirely new.

The play of "Pocahontas" met with great success and was played for several nights.

February 12, Mr. Booth began an engagement of three nights. He appeared as *Richard the Third*, *Iago* in "Othello," *Shylock* in "The Merchant of Venice," and *Sir Giles Overreach* in "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," a character in which he was unequalled in this or any other country.

He was followed by Mr. Oxley, a native tragedian, who played "Virginius," "Rolla," "Damon" and "William Tell." He was an actor of considerable merit, but his acting was somewhat crude and he needed experience. As a critic put it, he was "a good actor in the rough."

Mr. Booth again appeared in "Richard the Third," *Shylock*, *Sir Edward Mortimer* in the "Iron Chest," "King Lear," "Town and Country," and "The Review."

Monday, March 4, a new play entitled "Pontiac; or the Siege of Detroit," was produced with new scenery, dresses, decorations and music, and with a degree of splendor seldom witnessed. It was written by General Alexander Macomb, who ther^{of} commanded the United States armies. It is stated that the U. S. marines were used to represent the soldiers who fought and killed scores of Indians.

The great Celeste made her first appearance at this theatre, March 9, and owing to the high terms exacted for her services the prices of admission were raised. Her tour through this country and Canada had been most remarkable. In about a year she received \$22,300 in New York, \$13,500 in Boston, \$8,500 in Philadelphia, \$3,500 in Baltimore, \$1,500 in Montreal, \$1,000 in Quebec, \$130 in Albany, total about \$50,000. She then went to New Orleans where she received \$9,000 for six weeks' performance. Her engagement in that city was the most brilliant ever known in America up to that time, and the receipts for twenty-four consecutive nights averaged \$1,120.50 per night. She then played in Mobile before coming to Washington. She opened with the "French Spy; or, The Wild Arab of the Desert," a play which in after years was performed by Maggie Mitchell, Adah Isaacs Menkin, Helen Western, Leo Hudson, Lucille Western, Kate Fisher, Fanny Herring and others. She also danced a grand operatic ballet dance from "The Maid of Cashmere" called La Bayadere. Her reception was most enthusiastic and applause was showered upon her. In the disguise of a French lancer she was gay, dashing, and careless, and as a wild Arab boy, bold and dashing, and highly picturesque in appearance; but, when she appeared in female attire as *Mathilde*, so beautiful was her costume and so brilliant and graceful her general appearance that the audience was surprised and delighted. Her dancing was beautiful in the extreme and the curtain dropped in the midst of the most enthusiastic and rapturous applause.

She also played "The Wizard Skiff; or, The Tongueless Pirate Boy" and "The Wept of Wish-ton-wish," founded on Cooper's novel of "The Borderers." Her benefit drew the largest audience of the season, the

house literally overflowing from top to bottom, and hundreds were turned away being unable to gain admission. Her engagement was twice extended and she produced "The Moorish Page; or, The Knight of the Bleeding Scarf," "The Death Plank; or, A True Tale of the Sea," and "Victoire; or, A Tale of the American Camp." Her engagement was the most brilliant of all that had been played at the theatre.

She was succeeded by Mr. John Reeve and Mr. Balls, who appeared in "Laugh when You Can," "The Philosopher," "Catching an Heiress," "Bold Dragoons," "Tom and Jerry; or, Life in London," "The Rivals," "The Weathercock; or, Love Alone Can Fix Him," "The Young Widow," etc.

April 12, a new drama by George Washington Parke Custis called "Montgomerie; or, The Orphan of a Wreck," was acted and Herr Cline, who had been re-engaged, exhibited some of his remarkable feats.

Wm. E. Burton played a short engagement, appearing in "Speed the Plough," "Hide and Seek," "Tylney Hall," founded on Hood's popular novel of that name, "The Actor of All Work," and "Second Thoughts; or, The Breach of Promise."

Mrs. and Miss Watson, highly celebrated vocalists, appeared for eight nights in April and May in "Guy Mannering," "The Spoiled Child," "The Lord of the Manor," "No Song, No Supper; or, The Lawyer in the Sack," "John of Paris," "Old and Young," "The Pet of the Petticoats; or, Life in a Convent," and "The Marriage of Figaro," which was produced for the first time in this city. The boat duet was sung each night to great applause.

May 4, an entirely new drama called "The Hawks of Hawks' Hollow; or, The Refugees of 1782," founded on Dr. Bird's novel of that name, was produced. It

will be noticed that it was a custom in those days as well as at the present time to dramatize popular novels.

For the last week of the season Mr. Abbott and Mr. Balls were the attractions. "Romeo and Juliet," "Three and the Deuce," "All in the Wrong," "Pizarro," "The Weathercock," "Husbands and Wives," "Macbeth," "Speed the Plough," "The Green-Eyed Monster," and "Joe Miller, a Fellow of Infinite Jest," were the plays presented.

The winter season of 1836-37 opened December 7, with a national anthem (written by Dr. Bird) of "God Bless America" by the whole company. This was followed by "The School for Scandal," Mr. Rowbotham playing *Sir Peter Teazle*, and "The Turnpike Gate" with Mr. Cowell as *Crack, the Cobbler*. The company was well selected and efficient.

During the recess six private boxes were fitted up in elegant style in the second tier, three on each side for the accommodation of families and the price put at \$10. These boxes were not well patronized and the prices were reduced, and later they were done away with. There had been much complaint about the house not being sufficiently warm and this defect was remedied.

"Henry IV.," "The Soldier's Daughter," "The Hut of the Red Mountains; or, Thirty Years of a Gambler's Life," "Napoleon, First Consul and Emperor," "Is He Jealous?" "Scan. Mag.," "Love in Humble Life," "The Rose of Kerry," "The Patrician and Parvenu," "The Polish Exile," "The Rose of Ettrick Vale" and "Where Shall I Dine?" were produced by the stock company.

Miss Clifton, the highly celebrated native actress, appeared Monday, December 26, as *Bianca* in "Fazio; or, the Italian Wife" and remained until January 4, 1837.

Miss Clifton had the advantage of receiving instruction from Charles Kemble, and had been to England where she profited by witnessing the performances of the most talented and experienced performers in that country. Miss Clifton had a fine Madonna head, beautiful eyes, finely proportioned figure, and graceful and dignified movements. She was an actress of rare talents and ranked among the first artists in her profession.

She also played *Julia* in "The Hunchback," *Marianna* in Sheridan Knowles' "The Wife; or, A Tale of Mantua," *Juliet*, *Rachel* in "The Rent Day," and *Clari*, in "Clari, Maid of Milan." At her benefit, Monday, January 2, 1837, she played *Julia Dalton* in "One Hour; or, The Carnival Ball," which was presented that night for the first time in this country and in which she introduced the song of "The Banks of the Blue Moselle." This beautiful song was much admired and was very popular for many years.

Mr. Oxley then appeared for two nights in "Brutus" and "Hamlet."

On January 8, a new patriotic drama written by George Washington Parke Custis entitled "The Eighth of January; or, Hurrah for the Boys of the West," was presented together with "Speed the Plough; or, The Farmer's Glory."

Mdlle. Celeste made her appearance Wednesday, January 11, in "The French Spy" and was welcomed with shouts of applause from a very full house. She also appeared in "The Wept of Wish-ton-wish," "The Death Plank," "The Wizard Skiff," "The Moorish Page," "The Devil's Daughter" and "Victoire; or, A Tale of the Union Camp" and danced several of her famous dances. Her success was so great that her engagement was extended.

Mr. Tyrone Power, the celebrated Irish comedian, played an engagement of five nights opening Monday, January 30, with *Paudeen O'Rafferty* in "Born to Good Luck; or, The Irishman's Fortune;" and Dr. O'Toole in "The Irish Tutor." The following night he appeared as *Dennis Brulgruddery* in "John Bull; or, A Freeman's Fireside," in which he introduced the celebrated Irish drinking song of "The Cruiskeen Lawn." Mr. Power also played "Paddy Carey; or, The Boy of Clagheen," *Macshane* in "The Nervous Man and the Man of Nerve," *Pat Rooney* in "The Omnibus," *Sir Patrick O'Plenipo* in "The Irish Ambassador," *Murtock Delaney* in "The Irishman in London," "Etiquette Run Mad" and "Teddy the Tiler."

This inimitable actor met with the greatest success, the house being filled each evening to overflowing with the élite of the metropolis. More money was received on the third night of his appearance than had been received on any night since the opening of the theatre.

The manager, ever mindful of the wishes of his patrons, and on account of numerous parties occurring during the week of the engagement of Mr. Power, and with the intention of preventing an attendance at the theatre interfering with other engagements, arranged for the performances on Mr. Power's nights to commence at a quarter before 7 o'clock, and that portion of the amusements in which Mr. Power took part was concluded by 9 o'clock.

The manager also set apart one night to be known as juvenile night for the attendance of the younger branches of families. The performances selected were suitable to the occasion and the admission was half the regular price to the first and second tiers for all persons under fourteen years of age.

The celebrated and extraordinary Ravel Family played a very successful engagement beginning February 13 and ending on the 22d.

Monday, February 20, "The Jewess; or, The Council of Constance" founded on Mons. Scribe's spectacle of "La Juive" and arranged for the English stage by W. Moncrieff was presented with great splendor.

Mr. Burton played a number of his favorite characters and several of the members of the company, the stockholders and the orchestra took benefits, the season closing March 10.

Wednesday, September 13, Mr. Ward opened the National Theatre for one month, Miss Clifton appearing on the opening night as *Belvidera* in "Venice preserved." Her engagement continued five nights during which time she appeared in "Fazio; or, The Italian Wife," "The Hunchback" and as *Bianca* in "Bianca Visconte; or, The Heart Overtaxed," written expressly for her by N. P. Willis. She made a great hit, playing the very difficult and poetical character with unrivalled skill and judgment.

Yankee Hill followed Miss Clifton and those who liked fun—who wished to laugh till their sides ached and the tears rolled down their cheeks—who wished to be in good humor with all the world—and who desired to see the Yankee, the genuine "darn yer eyes," "slick as grease" cute Yankee with all his peculiarities, went to see him and heartily enjoyed his representations of that peddling, trading, swapping genus. He played "The Knight of the Golden Fleece; or, the Yankee in Spain," "Yankee Pedlar," "Jonathan Doublekins," "No; or, The Glorious Minority," "The Green Mountain; or, Love and Learning," "The Forest Rose" and "Kasper Hauser; or, Major Wheeler Abroad."

On September 26, the highly celebrated Miss Nelson made her first appearance in Washington as *Eolia* in "The Mountain Sylph; or, The Wizard of the Glen." She also appeared as *Porseus* in "The Deep, Deep Sea; or, The American Sea Serpent."

On Saturday, September 30, she took her benefit and made her last appearance in Washington. A novel and exciting scene was enacted. On the left of the stage sat a delegation of Indian chiefs, representing the Sioux, Ioways, Sacs and Foxes of the Missouri. With a single exception, not one of this band had ever before visited the settlements of his white brethren. Before them in the parquette they beheld a crowd of civilized men, mingled with whom were the kindred of some of them, the Sioux from the Falls of St. Anthony, part of these dressed in military coats, with epaulettes and hats with silver bands, and others in new blankets and leggings they had that day received as a present from their Great Father. In the boxes was an array of the beauty of Washington looking with strange intent on these sons of the forest. But the attraction for the party on the left of the stage was the agile, graceful and fairy figure of the *Mountain Sylph*. As she descended the mountain and her feet touched lightly the stage their cries mingled with the plaudits of their white brethren. As she moved from place to place, appearing and vanishing with a rapidity that reminded them of the fleetness of the deer in their native hunting grounds, their interest became more intense. Suddenly, a young chief of the Yanctons, Pa-la-ne-pa-pi (The man Struck by a Reckara), rose and threw at her feet the splendid war cap, composed of feathers of the war eagle, which he had often worn in bloody conflict with the enemies of his people. Most gracefully did the Sylph receive the offering, and appended it to her own rich costume.

A few moments passed, and an aged Sac Chief, Po-ku-na (The Plume), who during a long life had been distinguished for his friendship for the Americans, especially in the War of 1812, moved by a sudden impulse made to her an oblation of his own war cap. To-ka-ca (The man who inflicted the first wound), a celebrated brave of the Yanctons, almost immediately afterwards presented her with a splendid robe of the skins of the white wolf, which he had worn only at the more imposing ceremonies of his tribe. A buffalo robe richly ornamented was next the gift of Ha-su-za (The Forked Horn), the second chief of the Yanctons, and Mon-ka-u-sh-ka (The Trembling Earth), a young brave of rank, of the same tribe bestowed another robe of similar fabric and workmanship. At the presentation of his gift each of these chiefs and warriors addressed to the Sylph some word of compliment, the last declaring that he made the offering "to the beauty of Washington." With graceful ease she expressed her regret that she could not speak to them in their native language, and thanked them for their splendid donations. And she requested the interpreter to tell them that she should ever regard them as friends and brethren. Then advancing to the box she presented to each a beautiful ostrich plume, which they immediately placed upon their head-dresses. At the close, as she was ascending the mountain, she spread over her brow the splendid cap of eagle feathers, producing a most magical effect and creating a scene long to be remembered.

The next and final artist of the season was Miss Turpin who appeared in the operas of "La Somnambula," "Cinderella," "Rob Roy MacGregor" and "No," the season closing October 7.

The theatre was again opened January 1, 1838, for a season of six weeks with Mr. Vandenhoff as *Cato* in

the play of that name, followed by "Macbeth," "Coriolanus," "Virginius," "Hamlet" and the "Hunter of the Alps." Mr. Vandenhoff played to large, brilliant, fashionable and enlightened audiences. Mr. Vandenhoff's performance of "Cato" was an intellectual representation, giving full effect to all the noble and sublime sentiments of its classical author, and he was pronounced by most enlightened critics to be the only tragedian who had successfully represented Addison's great character since the days of John Philip Kemble.

Mr. Wills made his appearance on Wednesday, January 3, as *Nipperkin* in the afterpiece of "Spriggs of Laurel; or, The Rival Soldier." He made his bow to the audience amidst thunders of applause.

Monday, January 8, Mr. Rice, the celebrated representative of Jim Crow, or negro characters appeared as *Ginger Blue* in "The Virginia Mummy" and as *Sambo* in "The Eighth of January; or, Hurrah for the Boys of the West." During his engagement he also played "Jim Crow in London," "Black and White; or, the Mysterious Statues," "Peacock and the Crow," "Bone Squash Diablo" and "Oh Hush; or, The Virginia Cupids."

Tuesday, January 16, Mr. Booth began an engagement of five nights, during which he played "Richard III.," "The Iron Chest," "A new Way to Pay Old Debts" and "King Lear."

Another rich treat in the comic vein was then provided by the engagement of the talented and favorite comedian, Mr. W. E. Burton, noted alike for his histrionic skill and literary attainments. He performed "The Fine Old English Gentleman," "The Blue Devils," "John Jones, the Most Unfortunate Man in the World," *Billy Lackaday* in "Sweethearts and

Wives," "A Peculiar Position," "Good Husbands Make Good Wives," "Pleasant Neighbors," "The May Queen," "The Love Chase" and *Toby Tramp* in "The Virginia Mummy" with the song of "The Adventures of a Cork Leg." This song was quite amusing and always brought forth great applause.

Not desiring to interfere with the Citizens' Benevolent Ball which took place on Tuesday, January 30, Mr. Ward closed the theatre that night. In those days balls and parties were quite popular, and the performances at the theatre were often arranged so that the patrons of the drama could leave in time to attend the balls which were attended by the élite of the city.

Mr. and Mrs. G. Jones were the next performers, and appeared in "The Merchant of Venice," "Fazio; or, The Italian Wife," "William Tell," Knowles' play of "The Wife," "Hamlet," "The Hunchback" and "The Gamester." The season closed Tuesday, February 6, with a benefit to Mr. Ward, the manager, when the veteran tragedian Booth performed the part of *Lucius Junius Brutus* in the tragedy of "Brutus" in a masterly manner to a large and fashionable audience, including President Martin Van Buren, Vice-President Richard M. Johnson, Secretary of State John Forsyth and a large number of members of Congress. At the end of the play Mr. Booth was called for by the audience, who expected from him a speech, agreeably to a practice which had grown up. The great tragedian thought this speechifying instanter a custom

"More honored in the breach than in the observance,"

and walking across the stage, bowed respectfully twice to the audience and retired amidst universal applause.

Monday, March 5, 1838, the theatre was reopened for the purpose of presenting to the citizens of Washington Mr. Edwin Forrest, who made his first appearance since his return from Europe, where he had met with great success. He appeared in the arduous character of *Othello* and his masterly delineation of the jealous and frantic Moor procured for him the warmest and most unqualified praise of all who saw him. The house was well filled with a fashionable and discriminating audience. He also played "Virginius," "Richard the Third," "King Lear," "Damon," "The Gladiator" and "Metamora." He was poorly supported.

Mr. Finn, the celebrated comedian and punster, followed Mr. Forrest, appearing in "Monsieur Jacques," "Removing the Deposits," "The May Queen; or, The Unjust Steward," "The Legion of Honor; or, The Veteran of 102," "Master's Rival" and "The Hypocrite." Miss V. Monier, Mrs. Hughes and Mr. Wills took benefits, the season closing with Mr. Ward's benefit on Saturday, March 31, on which occasion "Mazeppa; or, The Wild Horse of Tartary" was presented, the Bacon Equestrian company being engaged to add novelty to the performance.

The theatre was again opened April 16, for three nights for the purpose of introducing the "Wonders of the Age," Mr. Porter, the Kentucky giant seven feet nine inches and Major Stevens forty inches high, Miss Gannon, the juvenile prodigy and others in several plays.

The old American Theatre had several times been advertised for rent or lease. Mr. Ward rented it and opened it Wednesday, April 25, with Mr. Porter, Major Stevens and company in order to afford the inhabitants of that portion of the city near Sixth Street

and Louisiana Avenue an opportunity to witness their performances.

Mr. Hackett followed at the American and appeared as *Colonel Nimrod Wildfire* in "The Kentuckian," *Mons. Marbleau* in "Monsieur Tonsin," *Soloman Swap* in "Jonathan in England," "Mons. Mallet," "Rip Van Winkle" and "Job Fox."

In order to accommodate numerous applicants Mr. Hackett's farewell benefit prior to his departure for Europe was given at the National Theatre and Mr. Hackett appeared in his most admirable impersonation of *Sir John Falstaff* and as *Colonel Nimrod Wildfire*, the performance closing with "Mazepa." On account of the rapturous manner in which the performances were received and the many requests for a repetition of the performance of *Falstaff* Mr. Hackett announced to the audience that he would, after playing an indispensable engagement in Philadelphia, Thursday night, return to Washington and perform *Falstaff* the following night. It was a most remarkable feat in those days that a performer should play in Washington one night, in Philadelphia the next, and in Washington again the third night. Herr Cline, a performer on the elastic cord, was engaged for a few nights, and the season closed May 7. Herr Cline was transferred to the American Theatre, and in conjunction with the stock company performed for a few nights when that theatre also closed.

Mr. Ward again opened the National Theatre, having engaged the celebrated and distinguished vocalist Madame Caradari Allan, who appeared Monday, May 14, in her favorite and far-famed character of *Amina* in "La Sonnambula" and on Tuesday in the character of *Rosina* in "The Barber of Seville." She was

assisted by the celebrated and talented vocalists Mr. Walton, Mr. Pearson, Mr. Brough and Miss Morgan.

The next performer was Mr. Edwin Forrest, who played four nights, opening Wednesday, June 13, as *Claude Melnotte* in Bulwer's new and excellent play of "The Lady of Lyons," which was presented for the first time in Washington. Miss Virginia Monier was *Pauline*, and Mr. Pickering *Colonel Dumas*. Mr. Forrest also appeared as *Damon* in "Damon and Pythias."

The great actress Miss Ellen Tree, supported by Mr. Frederick of the London and Park Theatres, made her début in Washington, June 18, 1838, as *Rosalind* in Shakespeare's beautiful play of "As You Like It," and as *Clarisse* in "The Barrack Room," played by her two hundred nights in London, Tuesday night as *Ion* in the play of that name, Wednesday as *Mariana* in "The Wife; or, A Tale of Mantua," and *Christine* in "The Youthful Queen; or, Christine of Sweden," Thursday *Constance* in "The Love Chase" and *Kate O'Brien* in "Perfection; or, The Maid of Munster," with the song of "By the Margin of Fair Zurich's Waters," and on Friday for the benefit of Mr. Frederick as *Ion* and *Katherine* in "Katherine and Petruchio." She delayed her departure and appeared on Saturday night as *Rosalind* and *Christine* for the benefit of Mr. Ward, the manager.

Miss Tree made a fine impression in Washington by her unequaled and unique performance of *Rosalind* in "As You Like It." Her performance of this character was an exceedingly chaste piece of acting. She evinced soul, tact, manner and action which stamped her as an actress of the highest grade. Nothing could excel her recitation of the original epilogue to this celebrated play. The finest passages of Shakespeare were delivered with full effect and nothing was wanting on the part of Miss

Tree to give to each sentiment its peculiar tone and emphasis.

In the interesting and engaging character of *Christine*, in the "Youthful Queen," Miss Tree appeared to great advantage. It was a perfect and exquisite piece of acting and in that character she appeared "every inch a queen."

During her stay in Washington she was honored with some of the most enlightened and brilliant audiences, notwithstanding the intense summer heat.

The theatre closed for the season with the benefit of Mr. Ward on Saturday, June 23, and opened again Tuesday, October 2, for the race nights only, with the stock company and the Wild Bedouin Arabs in their unrivalled feats of strength and agility.

The old American Theatre was opened by Robert J. Brittingham for one night, October 27. The plays were "William Tell," in which Mr. Brittingham appeared as *Gessler* and Miss Brittingham as *Albert*, and "The Benevolent Tar."

The National Theatre was opened by Mr. Ward for the winter season Monday, December 3, 1838, and introduced to the Washington public the most astonishing juvenile actress of the day, Miss Davenport, from the theatres Royal Drury Lane and Covent Garden. Miss Davenport was but ten years of age, and played *Richard the Third*, *Shylock*, *Young Norval*, *Sir Peter Teazle* and numerous other difficult characters. In all her representations she proved her astonishing powers of personating character, and in some of her efforts left an impression upon the mind and feelings which corresponded with the enthusiastic reports which had preceded her from Boston, New York and Philadelphia where she had been rapturously received. A theatrical critic said he considered her the most extraordinary

child that had ever been presented to the notice of the theatrical world since the time of the celebrated British Roscius, Master Betty. It was regretted, however, that so delicate and tender a frame should be so severely tasked with characters which require a man's intellectual and physical strength to render their performance agreeable to a humane and generous audience.

The performances for several nights thereafter were given by the stock company, the Wild Arabs and a ballet troupe. John Sefton appeared for a few nights as *Jemmy Twitcher*, and Monday, December 27, Miss Shirreff, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Seguin, Mr. Horncastle, Mr. Andrews, and Mr. Duggan appeared in grand opera, the operas given being "La Somnambula," "Amalie; or, The Love Test" and "Fra Diavolo," the season closing December 29, 1838.

The theatre again opened January 14, 1839, with Mr. C. B. Parsons in "Caius Silius" and Mr. Proctor in "Black Eyed Susan." They also appeared in "Brutus," "Macbeth," "Oronaska, the Mohawk Chief," "Paul Jones; or, The Pilot of the German Ocean" and "Nick of the Woods; or, Kentucky in 1783." In the latter piece Mr. Parsons played the character of *Roaring Ralph Stackpole, a Ring-tailed squaller and Rip staver from Salt River*. For Mr. Proctor's benefit "Rienzi" was presented and Mrs. Proctor, late Mrs. Willis and formerly Miss Warren, appeared as *Claudia*, Rienzi's daughter.

Monday, January 21, a new tragedy entitled "Velasco" was acted for the first time in Washington. Mr. James E. Murdock, who played the part of *Velasco*, made his first appearance in Washington on that occasion and Mrs. Sharpe, who played *Isadora*, did likewise. Mr. Murdock also played *Mr. Flightly* in "Married Rake." *Velasco* was written by Mr. Epes Sar-

gent and was very favorably received and elicited general applause. By the masterly acting of Mrs. Sharpe and Mr. Murdock the parts of *Isadora* and *Velasco* were rendered most striking and effective. "The Ransom; or, a Tale of Montesquin," "Perfection; or, The Lady of Munster," "The Weathercock; or, Love Alone can Fix Him," "My Aunt" and "The Lady of Lyons" were also performed. Mr. Hackett being in Washington on a visit, appeared as *Sir John Falstaff* for the benefit of Mrs. Sharpe, and Mr. Murdock as *Prince Henry*. Mrs. Sharpe played *Lady Elizabeth Freelo*ve in "A Day After the Wedding," in which she introduced the much-admired song of "The Blue Moselle," and as *Pauline* in "The Ransom." The weather was extremely cold, but there was a genteel, enlightened and numerous audience present. Mr. Hackett's *Falstaff* was as good as usual, and Mr. Murdock's representation of the Prince of Wales was a fine piece of acting, in excellent keeping with his other performances on the previous nights of his engagement.

January 28, Mdlle. Celeste, the celebrated actress from the Grand Opera House Paris, and Theatre Royal Drury Lane, Covent Garden, Haymarket and Adelphi, London, appeared as *Madeline* in "St. Mary's Eve," acted by her one hundred successive nights in the principal theatres of the British Metropolis and in Paris, Edinburgh, Dublin and New York with unbounded success. She also played "The French Spy," "The Child of the Wreck," "The Wept of Wish-ton-wish," "The Wizard Skiff," "The Star of the Forest; or, A Story of Old Virginia."

Mdlle. Celeste, by her unrivalled performances, drew admiring crowds with almost magnetic attraction and fairly eclipsed all other kinds of public entertainments.

Mr. Ward took his farewell benefit February 4, and two days later retired from the management of the theatre which had not been a profitable investment.

The theatre was then fitted up for equestrian performances and was opened February 14, with "Timour, the Tartar," which was followed by "Blue Beard," "El Huyder, Chief of the Ghant Mountain; or, The War Wolf of Hindostan," "Marcel, the Reprobate" and "The Forty Thieves." The equestrian performances closed March 2.

The American was again opened for two nights, Miss Gannon playing "The Four Mowbrays" and "The Actress of All Work."

The National Theatre was opened during race week by a juvenile opera and ballet troupe under the direction of Mr. Amherst and Mr. J. Clemons.

Messrs. Ward and Walton then leased the theatre, and opened December 9, with an opera company composed of Mrs. Martyn, formerly Miss Inverarity, from the Theatre Royal Covent Garden, London, Miss Poole from the Theatre Royal Drury Lane and Opera House, Mr. Martyn from the Theatre Royal and Covent Garden and Mr. Guibelli from the Theatre Royal Drury Lane and Queen's Theatre with a fine chorus and an orchestra composed of the principal members of the orchestra of the National Theatre, New York.

The operas given were "The Maid of Palaiseau," "La Somnambula," "Fra Diavolo," "The Waterman," "Cinderella" and "Fidelio."

For various causes the performances were not well attended. The great attraction had been to the galleries of the House of Representatives, where exciting discussion had been carried on. Besides this the theatre was so extremely cold that many persons were deterred from repeating their visits, notwithstanding

their strong desire to enjoy the rich treat which had been nightly presented. Monday, December 23, Miss and Mr. Vandenhoff appeared in "The Hunchback." "The Stranger" was announced for the following night, but owing to a heavy snow-storm the cars from Baltimore did not arrive that day, and consequently a part of the company was detained. The performances advertised for Tuesday were postponed to Thursday evening. "Richelieu" was the next play given.

On January 1, 1840, Miss Vandenhoff's benefit and the last appearance of herself and father took place, on which occasion Sheridan Knowles' popular play of "The Wife, a Tale of Mantua" and "Catherine and Petruchio; or, The Taming of the Shrew" were performed.

Mr. Vandenhoff's *Richelieu* was a most finished representation of the cardinal statesman. Miss Vandenhoff possessed a fine figure, a beautiful face, talent and genius. Her presentation of *Julie* had never been excelled, even by Fanny Kemble, the originator of that character. Her performance of *Catherine* was admirable, showing a capability in the comic line equally as strong as in the line of tragedy.

Saturday, January 4, Miss Virginia Monier, a native actress, made her appearance in the favorite character of *Portia* in "The Merchant of Venice."

The distinguished tragedian, Mr. Charles Kean, appeared Monday, January 6, in "Hamlet," Miss Monier playing *Ophelia*. He also appeared as *Shylock*, *Richard the Third* and *Sir Edward Mortimer* in "The Iron Chest," supported by Miss Monier. The weather was intensely cold and the stoves in the theatre did not keep the house warm, therefore the audiences were slim.

The fascinating, accomplished, and highly gifted Mrs. Fitzwilliam from the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane

and Covent Garden, London, was engaged for five nights, and made her début before a metropolitan audience on Monday, January 13, as *Miss Peggy* in "The Country Girl" and as the *Widow Wiggins* in an admired entertainment of that name written expressly for her by J. Buckstone. The audience was highly gratified with her performance in both characters, and the enthusiasm and rapturous delight which prevailed throughout the whole evening were unanimous. More unequivocal demonstrations of applause and such repeated and universal plaudits had never before been witnessed. Her representation of *Peggy* was an extraordinary performance.

Tuesday night she played "The Irish Widow," in which she sang "Och Gramachree, Kilkenny Dear" and a medley of melodies as sung by her in Buckstone's celebrated farce of "The Irish Lion." Also "Widow Wiggins," in which she sustained six characters. Other plays in which she appeared were "Mischief Making," "Foreign Airs and Native Graces," "No, No; or, The Glorious Minority," "The Irish Widow," "The Wedding Day" and "The Irish Lion." For her benefit she played *Miss Peggy* in "The Country Girl" with an admired ballad called "Pit Pat goes my Heart," and by particular desire introduced the beautiful ballad of "Robin Adair," accompanying herself on the harp.

By her transcendent abilities as a comic actress, her unique versatility, and her happy presentation of every character allotted to her Mrs. Fitzwilliam afforded the highest gratification to every person who had the pleasure of seeing her on the Washington boards. Everybody was delighted with Mrs. Fitzwilliam's performance of *Miss Peggy*, the *Widow Wiggins*, the *Widow Brady* and *Emily*. She was one of the most brilliant stars in the theatrical galaxy.

The American comedian, W. R. Blake, while passing through the city, was prevailed upon to perform a few nights and appeared January 20, as *George Gossamer* in "Laugh when You Can." Mr. O'Connell, the tattooed man, also appeared. Mr. O'Connell was shipwrecked in the North Pacific Ocean, remaining eleven years among the barbarous savages, where he underwent the painful operation of being tattooed, and was bound down for nine successive days in the most painful position. Mr. Blake also played "The Last Man; or, The Miser of Elktham Green," "Simpson and Co.," "The Irish Lion," "The Honey Moon," "School for Scandal," and "The Seven Clerks; or, The Three Thieves and The Denouncer."

Mdlle. Celeste played an engagement of six nights to crowded houses, beginning Monday, January 24.

February 5, Mr. W. E. Burton began a short engagement. The performance of *Billy Lackaday, Paul Pry, Jem Baggs* and *Tobias Shortcut* by this inimitable comedian elicited the warmest applause and afforded the most unequivocal demonstrations of delight in every part of the house. For his benefit and last appearance on Saturday, February 8, he appeared as *Bumble, the Beadle* in "Oliver Twist," which was performed for the first time on that occasion.

Monday, February 10, Mr. Booth presented "Richard the Third," and then played "Othello," "King Lear" and "The Mayor of Garrett."

The Rainer family of Tyrolean minstrels, consisting of Miss Margaret Rainer, Miss Elena Rainer, Mr. Simon Rainer and Mr. Lewis Rainer, appeared in connection with the stock company in a new play entitled "The Conscript; or, The Maiden's Vow," with Miss V. Monier in the leading rôle of *Theresa*. The following night Knowles' new play of "Love" was presented for the first time.

Wednesday, February 19, Mr. J. Wallack, Jr., one of the most promising actors of the day, and a member of the stock company, took his benefit playing *Bertram* in the play of that name and *William* in "Black-Eyed Susan." The next night the celebrated and popular actress, Mrs. Maeder, formerly Miss Clara Fisher, began an engagement of three nights, opening in "The Ladder of Love" and "The Englishman in India," in which she sustained the character of *Sally Scraggs* with the songs of "Hurrah for the Emerald Isle" and "Rory O'More." Other plays performed by her were "Gretna Green," "A Dream of the Future," "The Two Queens" and "The Welsh Girl."

Monday, February 24, Mr. Walton, one of the managers, took his first benefit, on which occasion Mr. Vandenhoff appeared as *Richelieu*, having made a long journey for that purpose. The play of "Nicholas Nickleby" was presented the same night for the first time.

After giving four half-price nights, when the plays were performed by the stock company, the season closed with a six nights' engagement of Mdlle. Celeste, who as usual met with tremendous success. Among the plays given was "The Maid of Cashmere," in which Celeste appeared as *Zelica*. The play was put on the stage in grand style, the scenery, painted by the celebrated artist Bengough, being superior to anything that had ever before been seen in Washington. Saturday, March 7, the last night of her engagement, she appeared in a new piece entitled "'The Frontier Maid,'" written for her by Major Noah, editor of the *New York Star*.

The American Theatre was opened in March for a few nights, then it was leased by Messrs. Jackson and Hardy of the American Theatre, Front Street, Balti-

more, who opened it March 31, Mr. Jackson appearing as *Sir Edward Mortimer* in "The Iron Chest." The season lasted two weeks, closing April 24, with "The Soldier's Daughter," "The Widow Wiggins," and "A Day After the Wedding," in which Mrs. Fitzwilliam sustained the principal characters.

The National Theatre opened on May 25, with Mr. Ranger, who appeared for nine nights. His admirable delineations of French and other characters made a most favorable impression, and his representation of *Clermont*, a French artist, in the beautiful drama of "The Artist's Wife," afforded a very rich treat to the friends of histrionic excellence.

Mr. Henry Wallack, Miss Turpin and Mr. Whitlock appeared Monday, June 15, in the musical drama of "Charles XII." Master Diamond danced a negro hornpipe and old Virginny breakdown, in which he made the greatest display of heel and toe genius ever witnessed in this city. Miss Turpin was an accomplished vocalist, and her song "Away to the Mountain's Brow" met with a warm reception. They performed several plays and Master Diamond appeared in a number of negro characters. The season closed Saturday, June 27.

Mr. Walton announced an engagement with the great Fanny Elssler to begin July 9, but, owing to a slight accident during her performances in Philadelphia, her appearance was postponed to Saturday, July 11. In addition to Mdlle. Elssler, Mons. Sylvain, from the Royal Academy of Music, Paris, was also engaged, and to give effect to the performance the corps de ballet of the Park Theatre, New York, and the Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, were engaged with a full and complete orchestra.

Fanny Elssler made her début before one of the most

crowded and brilliant audiences ever witnessed within the walls of the National Theatre. Long before the rising of the curtain the lower boxes, the orchestra seats (introduced on this special occasion) and the parquette were occupied; and before the farce was ended and the charming artiste made her appearance as *Lauretta* in "La Tarantula," the lower part of the theatre was literally jammed, so that many gentlemen were compelled to stand in the aisles of the parquette and the steps leading to it.

Miss Elssler's lovely person, her graceful elasticity, sylph-like form, and matchless skill as a danseuse, created a most enthusiastic feeling on the part of the audience, which was manifested not only by the usual demonstrations of applause, but by the expressive looks of admiration, delight and surprise which many, especially among the fair portion of the audience, manifested during the entire performance.

Her popular dance, *La Cracovienne*, was received with the most unbounded applause. Before the house was dismissed, Mdlle. Elssler, being loudly and enthusiastically called for, was conducted to the front of the stage, and made her grateful acknowledgments to the audience, stating with charming simplicity that "the kind and flattering reception which she had experienced that night made her perfectly happy." She then retired amidst the most deafening applause. At the close of the play on the last night of her engagement she was called out by the unanimous call of the house, and in returning thanks to the audience, which she did with surpassing grace and artlessness, remarked: "My stay among you has been very short, but I shall carry away with me recollections that will never be effaced." A shower of bouquets that were reserved as a final compliment to the matchless danseuse was thrown upon

the stage, and the curtain fell amidst cordial and rapturous applause.

The coming of Fanny Elssler created an immense furore. People raved over her beautiful face and form. The *National Intelligencer* was deluged with communications and poems in praise of her, and it has been frequently stated—although I have been unable to find written or printed confirmation of the statement—that ladies tore off their jewelry and threw it on the stage as an offering to her matchless beauty, grace and dancing.

The next time the theatre opened was Tuesday, December 8, 1840, under the management of Miss Virginia Monier. On this occasion Mr. Edwin Forrest appeared as *Claude Melnotte* in "The Lady of Lyons," the fair manageress playing *Pauline*. Mr. Forrest also played "Virginius," "Damon," "Richelieu," "Metamora," "The Gladiator" and "Richard, the Third."

The very popular and accomplished actress, Miss Clifton, was the next performer. Her engagement was for six nights and she performed "The Lady of Lyons," "Fazio," "The Wife," "The Stranger," "The Love Chase" and "Jane Shore."

Mr. Buckstone made his first appearance December 28, in the comedy of "Married Life" and the farce of "Kiss in the Dark." He played three nights.

During the year 1841 Mrs. Fitzwilliam, Mr. Hackett, Mr. T. D. Rice, Mr. Sweeny, an Ethiopian singer and dancer, Mr. Booth, Mr. Forrest and Mr. J. W. Wallack appeared in various plays. Mr. Fitzgerald Tasistro appeared June 28, as *Hamlet*, followed by *Shylock* and *Othello*. The season was an unprofitable one, and on August 26, a farewell complimentary benefit was given Miss Virginia Monier, the manageress, previous to her

departure for Europe on which occasion "Wives as they Were and Maids as they Are" and "Cramond Brig" were presented. The committee which had charge of the benefit included W. W. Seaton, Gen. J. P. Van Ness, Benjamin Ogle Tayloe and many other prominent citizens.

The Old American Theatre on Louisiana Avenue was converted into two spacious assembly rooms, which were opened on the 4th of March, 1841, with the inauguration ball of William Henry Harrison.

The season of 1842 at the National Theatre began January 27, with Mr. A. Addams in "Damon and Pythias," followed by "Virginius" and "Othello." Then came "Yankee Hill." Mr. Booth, Signor Hervio Nano, Mrs. A. Knight, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Butler, Mrs. Lewis, Mrs. McLean, Mr. and Mrs. Hield, Mr. Hackett and Mr. Tuthill were the other principal performers during the year. Tom Placide was a member of the stock company.

Mrs. Fitzwilliam and Mr. Buckstone appeared together on Thursday, July 28, in a drama written by Buckstone expressly for himself and Mrs. Fitzwilliam entitled "The Snapping Turtles." On account of the great expense attendant upon this engagement the prices were advanced to fifty cents and one dollar.

The year 1843 opened with a benefit to Miss Reynolds. January 4, Mr. Hackett appeared as *Richard, the Third*. He published a card in which he criticised the interpretation of the character of *Richard* as presented by other actors and stated how he thought *Richard* should be represented. The audience was not of the same opinion as Mr. Hackett. He did not repeat "Richard." Mr. Booth and Mr. Burton were among the other performers early in the year.

On the last night of the season, January 28, Mr. Burton appeared as *Dr. Pangloss* in the sterling comedy by George Colman, the younger, entitled "The Heir at Law." Miss Reynolds appeared in the beautiful character of *Cicely Homespun*.

Saturday, February 12, the National Theatre was opened under the management of Messrs. Hield, Collins, Tuthill and Donaldson with Miss Hildreth, who afterwards married Gen. Benjamin F. Butler, as *Julia* in "The Hunchback." She played six nights. The Hield management ended disastrously. Mr. L. M. Emery next opened the theatre with Peter Richings as director. Vandenhoff was the star. He was followed by an Italian opera company.

December 25, the celebrated violinist, Ole Bull, assisted by Mrs. Bailey, made his first appearance. He completely electrified his audience and produced enthusiastic and long-continued applause.

During a portion of the year 1844, the theatre was used as a circus. In April, the stockholders adopted a resolution stating that on account of the unfavorable financial condition of the corporation a crisis had arrived in the affairs of the establishment and that the theatre, with scenery, machinery, apparatus and debts should be sold under a deed of trust. The theatre was sold, a provision being inserted in the deed of sale that it should be used for theatrical purposes for a certain time.

Mr. W. E. Burton, the comedian, was the next lessee. He opened the theatre on Monday, January 13, 1845, with a good company and Mr. Anderson, a distinguished tragedian, made his first appearance. He appeared as *Claude Melnotte* in "The Lady of Lyons."

Mr. Ward fitted up the old American Theatre which had been converted into the Washington Assembly

Rooms, and opened it under the name of Ward's New Olympic Saloon, January 13, with a company composed of Mrs. Timm, Miss McBride, Mrs. Hautenville, Miss Pauline, Mr. John Sefton, Mr. Brunton, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Anderton, Mr. McDonald and Mr. Ward. After a short time the price of admission was reduced to twenty-five cents to all parts of the house. It did not last long.

Miss Clifton, Mr. and Mrs. Skerrit and Mr. E. S. Conner were some of the players who appeared at the National Theatre.

The inauguration ball of President Polk was held at the National Theatre on the night of March 4, 1845. On the following night, while the play of "Beauty and the Beast" was being performed with Mr. Burton as *Sir Aldgate Pump*, Charley Burke as *John Quill* and Mrs. Burke as *Selima*, fire broke out in the oil room in the back part of the building and the entire theatre was soon enveloped in flames. The edifice was entirely destroyed, the bare walls alone being left standing. Seven or eight dwelling houses and several stables were destroyed. Two companies of Alexandria firemen dragged their engines from that city, a distance of eight miles, in a very short time and arrived at the scene of the conflagration amid the cheers of an immense multitude. No lives were lost.

Mr. Burton moved his company to the Olympic Saloon, but the insufficient patronage bestowed upon the company compelled him to close the house after a few performances.

At a meeting of citizens and strangers held March 7, it was decided that a ball should be given at Carusi's Saloon on March 12, for the benefit of Mr. Burton and his company. Hon. James Buchanan, W. W. Seaton and a number of other prominent citizens and officers

of the Army and Navy were appointed a committee on arrangements. A resolution was adopted requesting the President and Mrs. Polk, ex-President and Mrs. Adams, ex-President and Mrs. Tyler, and Mrs. Madison to patronize this charitable undertaking by their presence.

After the burning of the National Theatre the city was without a theatre until Monday, November 30, 1846, when Mr. Kilmiste opened the Odeon, situated on the northeast corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Four-and-One-Half Street. This little theatre could accommodate between three hundred and four hundred persons. The company consisted of G. F. Brown, Mrs. Mossop, Mr. Littel, Mr. Gibbon, George Jordan, Miss Dugard, Mr. Knowles, Miss Eliza Kilmiste, Mr. McGee, Miss Emma Kilmiste, Mr. D. Hayes and others. Various plays were given by the company and January 4, 1847, Mdlle. Augusta, Mdlle. Dimier and Mons. Frederick, noted dancers, appeared. On account of the extraordinary expense incurred the manager announced that he would be compelled to double the prices of admission, which had been twenty-five and fifty cents.

A local play entitled "Did You Ever Send Your Wife to Georgetown?" was presented. I do not know what particular benefit was derived from a man sending his wife to Georgetown, but the play appeared to be a great success. It was played several nights and was repeated at intervals for quite a time.

Charley Burke, the grandson of the eldest Jefferson and half brother of the present "Joe" Jefferson, appeared as *Dickory* in "The Spectre Bridegroom." In this play Mr. Nicodemus started to Aldwinkle Hall to marry Miss Aldwinkle but on the way there had an apoplectic fit and died. His cousin, also named Nicodemus, then went to Aldwinkle Hall to notify Mr. Ald-

winkle of the death of his cousin. He arrived late and being mistaken, on account of his close resemblance to his cousin, for the one expected did not have an opportunity to explain matters. Dickory, who had been at the half-way house, had seen the dead body of Mr. Nicodemus and reported his death to Mr. Aldwinkle, who would not believe him. He thought that Dickory had been drinking, and told him that Mr. Nicodemus had arrived and was in the next room eating and drinking and making love to his daughter. Dickory reiterated his statement that he had seen the dead body of Mr. Nicodemus and that it must be his ghost that had arrived.

The only time that I saw Charley Burke was in the character of *Dickory*, and although it has been many years since then I have never forgotten his appearance when he came on the stage after he had seen *Mr. Nicodemus*, whom he took to be the ghost of the dead man. His red hair stood on end, his face wore a look of terror and his hand, in which he held a candle was shaking like an aspen leaf. *Mr. Nicodemus* was dressed in sombre black and his funeral air, and tone of voice soon made all of the people at Aldwinkle Hall think that he was really a ghost. I have also remembered the reply and tone of voice of *Mr. Nicodemus* to *Miss Georgiana Aldwinkle* when she asked him if she could help him to some cold huckleberry pudding: "I never eat cold huckleberry pudding."

Mr. Burke also played "The Irish Tutor," "Catching an Heiress," "Grandfather Whitehead" and other plays.

Mdlle. Malvini, a celebrated danseuse, appeared for a number of nights, and Mr. John Sefton appeared March 25, as *Mr. Golightly* in "Lend Me Five Shill-

ings." The Odeon closed April 10, 1847, with a benefit to the stock company.

Messrs. G. F. Brown and H. F. Nichols leased a large new and commodious brick building on the south side of Pennsylvania Avenue near Four-and-One-Half Street and fitted it up as a theatre to accommodate one thousand auditors and called it the Adelphi. It was afterwards Young's coach-making establishment. It was opened December 20, 1847, with a stock company, of which Mr. Bradshaw, Mr. Herbert, Mrs. H. F. Nichols, Mrs. Hautenville and the proprietors were members. On the opening night "The Honeymoon" was given with Mrs. Nichols as *Juliana*. "The Stranger," "Romeo and Juliet," and other well-known plays were performed.

Mr. Kilmiste opened the Olympic Saloon with "The Model Artists" but it soon closed. Mr. C. Jenkins then opened it with a minstrel troupe and reduced the prices of admission to twenty-five and twelve and one-half cents.

During the early part of 1848 the performances at the Adelphi were given by the stock company. February 16, the Yankee comedian, J. S. Silsbee, began an engagement of four nights.

Mr. and Miss Logan played a week's engagement in "The Hunchback," "Lady of Lyons" and "The Honeymoon."

Monday evening, February 28, 1848, Miss Julia Dean, the talented young actress, and Mr. Dean, the popular tragedian, made their first appearance in Washington in "Evadne; or, The Statues." Miss Dean also performed "Lucretia Borgia," "The Wrecker's Daughter," "The Wife," "Love's Sacrifice," "Romeo and Juliet," etc. Miss Dean's personations of the most arduous tragic characters were such as to

elicit general commendation, not only from the press, but from the most competent judges of theatrical representations.

A complimentary benefit was given to Miss Dean on Wednesday, March 15, by prominent citizens of the city, on which occasion the company volunteered their services and the managers surrendered the entire control of the house to the committee on arrangements. The play was "The Hunchback" and the house was filled to overflowing.

Mr. E. S. Conner, Barney Williams, the Irish comedian, Geo. Vandenhoff, Miss H. Fanning Read, Mr. De Bar and Mr. Booth were the next performers, and the season closed May 6 with a complimentary benefit to the managers.

Wednesday, June 7, 1848, the Adelphi was again opened with the great Operatic Troupe, consisting of Mrs. Seguin, Mr. W. H. Reeves and Mr. Seguin assisted by Mr. Gardner, Miss Lichstenstin, Mr. Sauer and others. The opera was "Maritana." "The Bohemian Girl," "Fra Diavolo," "Elixir of Love," "Norma" and "La Somnambula" were also given to large houses and generous applause.

The regular fall and winter season opened November 15, with the play of "The Hunchback" by a strengthened stock company.

Monday, December 11, Mr. and Mrs. Farren appeared in "The Hunchback," and during their engagement performed many pieces. Mrs. Farren's impersonation of the parts of *Julia* in "The Hunchback," *Marianna* in "The Wife," and *Juliet* in "Romeo and Juliet" were masterly efforts.

Mr. Buckley opened the Olympic, Tuesday, January 18, 1848, with a stock company. It remained open about two months, during which time the management

changed twice. Those who played there were Mr. Moorehouse, Mrs. J. B. Booth, Mrs. George Jones, Mr. Booth and Elder Adams.

During the season at the Adelphi which closed April 16, 1849, the principal performers were Julia Dean, Charley Burke, Mr. Bellamy, Miss Kate Horn and Mrs. A. Drake. The Danseuse Viennoises, forty-eight in number, under the direction of Mad. Josephine Weiss, gave two performances. The Adelphi was reopened Monday evening, May 28, 1849, by Hamm & Owens, managers of the Holliday Street Theatre and Baltimore Museum, Baltimore, with the Astor Place Opera Troupe consisting of Signorina Amalia Patti, Signora Lietti Rossi, Signor Mona, Signor Bote, Signor Patti, Signor Parozzi, Signor Piemontese, Signor Rossi Corsi, Signor Sanquerico, with full chorus and orchestra. They sang "Il Barbierre Di Seviglia," "Chiari Di Rosenberg," "Ernani" and "Cinderella."

Miss Gannon, John E. Owens and Mr. Booth also appeared and the season closed June 9.

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, August 27, 28 and 29, the Nightingale Ethiopian Serenaders, Messrs. H. K. Johnson, M. W. White, W. H. Morgan, George Kunkel and Harry Lehr, under the management of Geo. W. Harvey, gave concerts at the Adelphi.

The fall and winter season of 1849-50 began November 19, the theatre being under the management of Cartlitch and Brown.

During January, February, March, April and May, 1850, J. P. Adams, W. Marshall, the young American tragedian, Mr. and Mrs. Barny Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Pitt, Mdlle. Rosa Jacques, Charley Burke, Mr. and Mrs. Farren, H. J. Seymour, Mr. Booth, Mr. Hudson, Sam Glenn, Julia Dean, Anna Cruise, John E. Owens and Charlotte Cushman appeared in various plays.

Miss Cushman made her first appearance in Washington Wednesday, May 1, 1850, in her celebrated character of *Meg Merriles* in "Guy Mannering." High as the public expectation had been raised by the reports of her acting elsewhere it was not disappointed, and at the close of the performance this truly great actress was called before the curtain to receive a double manifestation of public applause. She played *Lady Macbeth* the next night. In the daggar scene she absolutely electrified the audience; the tone, the expression of face, the whole manner, was so peculiarly fine that the applause was loud and long-continued.

She also played *Mrs. Haller* in "The Stranger," and *Julianna* in "The Honeymoon." The season closed May 17, with Julia Dean as *Julia* in "The Hunchback." The theatre as again opened June 5, with Kate and Ellen Bateman, aged four and six years, in "Richard, the Third." There was a short summer season and the regular season opened October 21. During this season Mrs. Flynn, J. H. Taylor, Mr. Booth, Joseph Proctor, Mr. Chanfrau, who appeared as *Mose* in "A Glance at New York," Mr. J. Seymour, Mrs. Mossop and Miss Fanny Wallack were the principal performers. Miss Wallack was a native of Washington and her engagement was most successful. Besides *Juliet*, *Margaret Elmore* in "Love's Sacrifice," and *Pauline* in "The Lady of Lyons," she played "Hamlet" for her benefit, and rendered the part with so much truth and delicacy that she was rapturously called for when the curtain dropped. Her reading throughout reflected the highest credit on her judgment and capacity.

November 8, 1850, Edwin Booth, then a youth of sixteen years of age, made his first appearance in Washington as *Hemeya* to his father's *Pescara* in Shield's tragedy of "The Apostate." He played the character

in a very creditable manner, giving ample evidence that the mantle of the father would fall upon the son.

In 1844, a new star appeared in the dramatic firmament which, increasing in brilliancy, soon outshone all others in the constellation and spread its rays all over Europe. This star became known as "The Swedish Nightingale," and the most eminent composers pronounced her the musical miracle of the age. Moscheles said she had "truly enchanted him." Lablache declared that "every note was like a pearl." Mendelssohn wrote that she was the first artist that "united in the same degree natural gifts, study and depth of feeling," the combination of the three never existing before. She made her début in opera in Stockholm in 1838, when eighteen years of age, but in 1841 left the stage and went to Paris, where she studied under Manuel Garcia, reappearing on the stage in Berlin in 1844. She appeared in opera in Her Majesty's Theatre, London, May 4, 1847, and the critic Henry F. Chorley wrote that "the town" sacred and profane went mad about her. The Lind mania was epidemic everywhere in Europe during the year 1848, and March 18, 1849, she made her last appearance on the operatic stage as *Alice* in "Robert, Le Diable." Her fame had spread to the new world, and P. T. Barnum sent an agent to Europe to make an engagement with her for a series of concerts to be given in the principal cities of the United States. A contract was signed with Jenny Lind at Lubeck, Germany, January 9, 1850, by which she was to receive \$1,000 each for one hundred concerts. The contract was closed at the end of the ninety-third concert. In June, 1851, the New York Tribune stated that it had Mr. Barnum's authority for saying that there had been no unfriendly difference whatever between himself and Miss Lind and the reason for terminating

the engagement was his desire to visit Europe in the *North America*; in proof of which the following note was published for Miss Lind:

To P. T. BARNUM—*My Dear Sir:* I accept your proposition to close our contract to night, at the end of the 93d concert, on condition of my paying you \$7,000, in addition to the sum I forfeit under the conditions of not finishing the engagement at the end of 100 concerts. JENNY LIND.

Phil., June 9, 1851.

Miss Lind arrived at New York, September 1, 1850. Thousands of people covered the shipping and piers and other thousands congregated on the wharf at Canal Street to see her land. Triumphal arches were erected bearing the legends “Welcome Jenny Lind” and “Welcome to America.” Twenty thousand persons surrounded her hotel and she appeared and gracefully bowed in response to the great outburst of applause which greeted her. At night she was serenaded by two hundred members of the Musical Fund Society escorted by three hundred firemen in red shirts and bearing lighted torches.

The desire to see and hear this queen of song was so great that very large prices were paid for seats and the receipts were so large that Mr. Barnum gave Miss Lind a large portion of the profits in addition to the \$1,000 per night. From her portion of the receipts for the first two nights in New York she gave \$10,000 in charity. During her stay in the United States she gave away over \$50,000 in charity.

The excitement over the “Swedish Nightingale” spread more rapidly over this country than in the old world.

Washington had no hall sufficiently large to accommodate the large crowds which were expected to attend

the concerts of the great and unrivalled songstress when she should come to this city. Messrs. Willard and Reeside took immediate measures to provide one. They removed the ruins of the old National Theatre and erected a large hall on the site. A commission consisting of Robert Mills, architect, Joel Downer and James King, builders, made a thorough examination of the building and certified that every part of it was sufficiently strong to sustain with safety the largest audience that could possibly be accommodated on its floors. The building was called National Hall and would seat 3,500 persons.

Two concerts were announced, one to take place on Monday, December 16, and the other Wednesday, December 18. The prices of seats were fixed at seven dollars, five dollars and four dollars.

In addition to Jenny Lind there were Signor Belletti, tenor, Joseph Burke violinist, and Messrs. Kyle and Seide, performers on the flute. The orchestra was conducted by Mr. Benedict, and the whole Germania Musical Society took part in the concerts.

Jenny Lind arrived in this city from Baltimore, Sunday evening, December 15, and was quietly driven to her lodgings, which was in striking contrast with her arrival in other cities, where people ran after her carriage and indulged in boisterous demonstrations. The following day, in company with Messrs. Barnum, Belletti, Benedict and Reeside, she called on President Fillmore and, attended by the President, visited the various apartments of the White House. She went to the Senate Chamber and was an attentive listener to the debates then going on. The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives courteously tendered to her the use of their official chambers, but owing to the dampness of the passages in the Capitol

she was afraid her voice would be affected and left the building without visiting the House. She went to the U. S. Supreme Court room, and had the gratification of listening to Mr. Clay while he was arguing a cause. She expressed great admiration for Mr. Clay, particularly his noble sentiment "I would rather be right than be President."

At noon on the 17th, Miss Lind, by invitation of Mr. Washington, embarked in a special steamer, attended by Mr. Washington himself, Messrs. Barnum, Belletti, Benedict and several ladies and gentlemen, invited guests and proceeded to Mount Vernon, where the party spent some time in viewing the many interesting and impressive memorials of the consecrated spot.

The first concert was given as announced on Monday, December 16, 1850, and was attended by the largest, most brilliant and certainly the most gratified audience which had ever assembled at any public entertainment in this city. Every part of the spacious hall was occupied by eager auditors. Among those present were the President of the United States and family, the President of the Senate, Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, Mr. Crittenden, Major-General Scott, Justices of the U. S. Supreme Court and many senators and representatives.

The good feeling of the audience towards the president, Mr. Webster, Mr. Clay, General Scott and Mr. Crittenden was manifested in the most marked and cordial manner as these distinguished visitors entered the hall.

The audience began to assemble as early as six o'clock, and when at last the appearance of Miss Lind gave to reality the place of pent-up expectation she was greeted with a burst of applause which fairly shook the stout walls of the building. Silence was at once restored and as the beautiful strains of the *Casta Diva*

came clear and liquid from the lips of this queen of song a death-like stillness prevailed. When she finished there was a torrent of applause which was repeated again and again.

Her next was a trio for voice and two flutes, called "Camp of Silesia," composed expressly for Miss Lind. The flutes were played by Messrs. Kyle and Seide.

In this piece she imitated and surpassed the most exquisite tones of the flute by her finer cadence. Nothing could excel the brilliancy of this performance and it fairly set the audience wild.

The bird song and the echo song were given with marvelous accuracy and a sweetness of melody perfectly unimaginable until heard.

At her second concert she sang for the first time in America the national song of "Hail Columbia," to which her unrivalled voice, accompanied by Signor Benedict's powerful and admirable orchestra, gave the highest effect.

It was supposed that the great crowd of high and humble which flocked to the first concert, notwithstanding the unheard of, but necessary, prices was moved chiefly by curiosity to hear one so renowned in song and who had won so many hearts by her goodness. But, when a greater crowd filled the immense hall a second time and at the same prices, it could be justly ascribed to but one cause, and that one the unequalled attractions of the artiste combined with high esteem for the woman.

Her matchless purity of style, surpassing vocal powers, and excellence of private character had charmed the audiences and all Washington paid tribute to Jenny Lind.